

## Oral History Project

ALYCE SCHEIDECKER

interviewed by Frank Baumgardner

Frank: Do you recall very much of your parents and grandparents?

Alyce: I have records in the old bible and I was just checking up on them. My grandparents come from Markville, Maine in 1800. They moved to Santa Rosa....Alice and Nell Griffith, the poet.

F I remember Nell Griffith, she used to putter down in the woods when we'd go down there.

A She wrote a poem about a tree. She was a good friend of Charmain London, Jack London's wife. "He Who Plants a Redwood Tree" and it was published in the Santa Rosa paper..... Underneath it says a stone where Jack London's ashes are buried in the Valley of the Moon, one he had laid aside when he was building his famous Wolf House. I was pretty young to attend his funeral but my father was a draftee in the Spanish American War.....I was about a 3 year old kid. I think he died in 1926.

F Do you remember the big things that happened like the big flu epidemic that was in 1918-1919?

A Yes I remember my mother was always taking care of sick people and everyone had it and only one who didn't get it was my Aunt K. Brush.....My Uncle Joe grew pears and cherries. The Holbrooks, I think they produced apple juice.....Luther Burbank.....I used to have a photograph of him that he signed. The 1906 earthquake ruined my grandfather George C. Holbrook. He was a musician, taught music up about where the Exchange Bank used to be - what was Fourth Street. His piano crashed down all to pieces.

F Tremendous damage was done.

A Yes, chimneys were damaged.

F The driveway that goes up to that old house, what is the history about that? All the palm trees, evergreens, where did they come from?



BY Frank Baungardner

Alyce: The first Mr. Scheidecker had the first commercial nursery in Sonoma County. He got most of his plants from Luther Burbank and the palm trees at Palm Hospital were supplied by Mr. Scheidecker.

The first hospital they had was in the old Walker home on the hill behind where the Glendale Bank is and it was a two story house and thats where I had my appendectomy - the first one given by Dr. Chester Marsh.....couldn't keep sterile enough and Martha Hillwig well known.....As Sebastopol grew bigger they decided to put hospital down lower from the hill.

Frank: Camp Meeker, were they considered the kind of people who lived in the sticks out there?

A Oh yes.

F Do you remember anything about your social life or activities?

A I lived part of the time at International House in Berkeley. I liked different kinds of people. Since my husband and I had no children we became interested in American Field Service, took in foreign students from France, Switzerland, Thailand. We were ineligible at first because American Field Service wouldn't allow people without children to get the foreign students, but the first one we had was Marcel Hoover from Switzerland. He didn't get along with his parents and was very unhappy. We had attended fund raisers and he said could he live with us? We had taken him on some trips, and I said I think its against the rules, but he said he knew people in New York and he wrote to them and they gave permission to him to live with us. He was very happy with us and he wrote to the Press Democrat and told them we were a wonderful couple and that was helpful when my husband was running for a position on the Municipal Court. The next one was not happy either. She was put in with a poor family with a lot of children and her father had been in the police department in Bangkok, Thailand. She was used to more luxuries and so we took her in. She was brought to us by ? and Todd from Laos. He lived with us and wanted to be an engineer. He went to Santa Rosa Junior College and the



Alyce

Con't: University of California at Berkeley and an engineering school in St. Louis and graduated with honors. He is now head structural engineer for the County of Santa Clara. He phones me every two weeks. He has two children and his son is named Albert for my husband. Recently someone set fire to bushes at his home in South San Jose. Always bashing people and Koreans. He got permission to go home, his children were in school and his wife works in the daytime. He got out the hose buy someone had poked holes in it. Then the firemen came and saved the house.

F Do you remember any particular teachers who were an influence on you?

A Marion Whitney. She taught History and Miss Mott, she taught English, very good, at J.C. and at Analy Miss Lorraine and Jack Gerboth, Political Economics, a strong minded person and a principal I liked from 1925 to 1929. I graduated with honors from all schools, a Phi Beta Kappa from Berkeley. I just sent \$100 to J.C. Foundation. Floyd Bailly was lead man then. Reminds me of Laura Griffith Huffbinner(?), she was a botanist. Painted pictures of flowers, flowers of California and she got permission from my father to build a tower and put a telescope in it. She taught me astronomy and anybody interested in it. There is a memorial to her at Santa Rosa J.C. and when she died I gave her books on Botany and some of her paintings to the Forestville School, they have them there in their library.....(someone who became very deaf but was good to her as a child and taught her about newts, frogs, salamanders, etc.)

F Do you remember Sebastopol, the early days, the downtown when you grew up?

A I'd get on a train at Graton and go to school. They built a new one while I was there. I was amazed at how the area grew after that.

F Do you remember a train stop at Trenton? What was that little hamlet like? Was there an inn?

A There was a Druids Hall. There was the voting precinct for



Alyce

Con't: years, as it became urbanized this little place didn't grow much any more.

F Where did your parents shop?

A For many years in Graton, grocery and post office was in the same building, sort of a general store. Aunt K Brush lived there. There's a Brush Street in Graton named for him. Brush Creek was named for family members, they had relatives who were bankers in Santa Rosa. I am a life member of the Graton Community Club, but I'm too sick to go now. One of the founders of it was my Aunt K Brush. My mother belonged too. They met once a month, tried to help schools, had flower shows, some people showed slides to make money and gave to charitable causes.

F Were there any particular authors you liked to read?

A I liked Jack London and read all his books but that was because I knew him, but I don't know - I've read books all my life, the old classics, and I have books now that people bring me. I have a young woman who lives over my garage, Linda Robertson and she brings me books from the library and Kathy Olman, daughter of Harley Olman is an old family in this area, pioneer family..Karlle Olman is the daughter of Bessie Hicks and Walter Olman and Bessie was adopted by Al's parents, brought up as Bess Scheider but because her mother had terrible time in child birth and lived up Mendocino area, she got quite sick when she had Bess and her husband died so she took her to Mrs. Schieder, Sr. and because that was her sister. She said she'd take Bess after she got a job somewhere. Whe went to San Luis Obispo to be with her friend Docha Paget. Well, she didn't do anything for so long that Scheideckers adopted Bess. It was all right with Sadie, Mrs. Scheidecker's sister and then she married Mr. Paget, had children and Docha Paget was in Education in Santa Rosa and I've forgotten details of what happened to her.

F How did you meet your husband?

A Well Al and his brother Louie used to walk past our house to go to school. He was 8 years older than I and I used to see



BY Frank Baungardner

Alyce

Con't: them and their sister Virginia and she was my age. We went to UC Berkeley and we lived in an apartment for 6 months until she couldn't afford to go anymore and dropped out of school. Later she married Mark Nelson, lived over Twin Hills area. Then I moved into International House. My best friend then was Janet Ansler who was of a Jewish family and later married a doctor Ralph Rosenberg and I was invited to their Jewish wedding and also to Bar Mitzvah of their first child but I've lost touch with them, so and so many deaths. Lowell Hall was in my class. He married Lillian Jacobsen who lived over on what's now the road to Forestville. They established Hall Pharmacy in Santa Rosa. Lowell died of a heart attack while mowing the lawn. They had moved to Vancouver, Washington. I had a letter from Lillian, she wrote a book about her family's experiences, their coming from Poland. I haven't heard in quite a while, she had a heart attack so maybe she died, I don't know.

F Do you have any advice to pass along - words of wisdom for future generations?

A Oh, I don't feel confident. I don't know if you noticed my name spelled Alyce? That happened I had a 5th grade Oak Grove School teacher named Mrs. Gibbons and she said spell it Alyce. It would look good with my maiden name Ayer and I had complained there were so many Alices in my family and letters going to the wrong people. It was Ayr, but got an 'e' in it somewhere along the line.

When my friend left Berkeley it was a change but we remained friends all of our life. She moved to Emmet near Boise, Idaho. She had a daughter and a son. She has a daughter living there, the son got some kind of a disease and died and the other daughter went to UC Davis, studied medicine. She developed an interest in drug developing and sent her to Australia to do some diving on the coral reefs and she found something there that they developed an effective heart medicine from. I don't know what the heart medicine name is but



Alyce

Con't: she still lives in Australia.....

F What year were you married?

A 1933. I've been married over 50 years.

F What was his occupation?

A He was a lawyer in Santa Rosa and then appointed deputy district attorney, then came back to Sebastopol and appointed Justice of the Peace, then Municipal Court Judge until he died.

F How about health? Words of wisdom?

A I think exercise. I used to walk several miles a day when I could but I now have neuropathy and it effects my legs and feet. I'm in terrible pain, I get depressed and take anti-depression medicine and only get 3 hours sleep a night. I consider myself lucky if I get 5 hours. I try to keep in shape. I was over weight and I worked at my own diet - only 1200 calories a day - I lost excess weight. I also have ulcers in the colon so no seeds in my diet, not even tomato seeds. The big problem is the medicine that is helpful to these things, I'm allergic to. I passed out in Safeway store and taken to the hospital and in 1985 when my driver's license was to be renewed, I didn't di it. I felt if I were to black out I might hurt somebody and so.....comes in at noon. She's my desegnated driver and takes ne to the doctor or where I have to go.